

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed December 3, 2004, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration. To further the prosecution of this application, each of the issues raised in the Office Action is addressed herein.

Claims 2-13 and 15-51 are pending in this application, of which claims 22-34, 38, 42 and 43 are independent claims. By this amendment, Applicants have cancelled claims 1 and 14 and have amended claims 2-5, 7-11, 13, 15-23, 27-30, 44, and 49-51. The application as now presented is believed to be in allowable condition.

A. Allowed Claims/Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation that on page 7, the Office Action indicates that claims 24-26, 31-43 and 45-48 are allowed.

In view of the allowance of claim 24, Applicants have amended dependent claims 2-5, 7-11, 13, and 15-21 to depend from claim 24. Therefore, claims 2-13 and 15-21 are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 24.

With respect to claim 24, Applicants note that the feature of “at least one microprocessor-based controller” in combination with the other recitations of claim 24 appears to render the claim patentable over the art of record, at least as compared to claim 1. Likewise, Applicants note that the feature of “at least one microprocessor-controlled light source” in method claim 31 appears to render this claim patentable over the art of record.

With the foregoing in mind, Applicants have amended several other independent claims to include either “at least one microprocessor-based controller” or “at least one microprocessor-controlled light source” to place these claims in condition for allowance. Specifically, Applicants have amended each of independent apparatus claims 22 and 23 to include the recitation of “at least one microprocessor-controlled light source.” Similarly, Applicants have amended each of independent method claims 27, 28, 29, and 30 to include the recitation of “at least one microprocessor-controlled light source.” Any claim depending from these independent claims likewise has been amended accordingly.

B. Claim Rejections

Claims 1, 2, 27, 28, 44 and 49-51 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Epple (U.S. Patent No. 5,689,730). Claims 3-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Epple in view of Campagna et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,394,716). Claims 7-19 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Epple in view of Che et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,636,303). Claims 22, 23, 29 and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Campagna et al in view of Che et al.

The foregoing rejections are respectfully believed to be rendered moot by the amendments herein, which were made solely to expedite prosecution of this application toward allowance by accepting subject matter deemed allowable by the Examiner. Applicants do not necessarily concede that the foregoing rejections are proper, and reserve the right to file one or more related applications directed to the subject matter of the claims prior to the amendments herein.

C. General Comments on Dependent Claims

Since each of the dependent claims depends from a base claim that is believed to be in condition for allowance, for the sake of brevity Applicants believe that it is unnecessary at this time to argue the allowability of each of the dependent claims individually. However, Applicants do not necessarily concur with the interpretation of the dependent claims as set forth in the Office Action, nor do Applicants concur that the basis for the rejection of any of the dependent claims is proper. Therefore, Applicants reserve the right to specifically address the patentability of the dependent claims in the future, if deemed necessary.

D. Information Disclosure Statements

Applicants respectfully point out to the Examiner that a copy of a Form-1449 accompanying an Information Disclosure Statement mailed on October 9, 2003, initialed by the Examiner to indicate review of the references cited therein, has not yet been received by

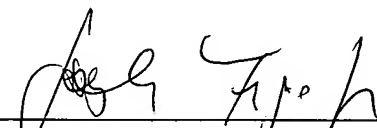
Applicants' representatives. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner provide the initialed Form-1449 at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

E. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application should now be in condition for allowance. A notice to this effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes, after this amendment, that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the Applicants' attorney at the telephone number listed below to discuss any outstanding issues relating to the allowability of the application.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicants hereby request any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 50/2762.

Respectfully submitted,
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